

Colorado

Workforce Development Council

STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM (SWIS) COMMITTEE MEETING

8110 N Academy Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO

January 24, 2006
12:00pm – 3:30pm

Strategic Planning
Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

Members:

Samantha O'Neill-Dunbar (proxy for Nancy McCallin), Tom Looft (proxy for Rick Grice), Doug Glynn (proxy for Bill Moloney), Joe Collins, Peggy Herbertson, Mark Warne, Andrea Powner

Council Staff:

Booker Graves, Glenn Little

Absent:

Nancy Stahoviak, Les Watkins, Marva Livingston-Hammons, Mary Hillsman, Walt Speckman, Barbara Kirkmeyer

Meeting:

I. Welcome and Introductions – Meeting was called to order at 12:30pm

Peggy welcomed everyone to the meeting and made a membership announcement. Barbara Kirkmeyer, as the Acting Executive Director of the Department of Local Affairs, has assigned Booker to be her proxy in this and all future meetings that she is unable to attend.

II. State Plan Waivers

The Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE) is applying to the US Department of Labor for new waivers and modifications to the Two-Year State Plan. The Department of Labor is encouraging states to apply for as many waivers as they can, in order to give the states more flexibility in their funding and allow more local decision-making. While states can't waive eligibility or performance standards, the following are the waivers and/or modifications that Colorado is seeking:

- a) Modify the waiver eliminating the 20% limit on transfer of local funds between the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The proposed change would increase the current 40% limit to allow 100% of funds to be transferred between the two programs and would increase local flexibility in designing programs to meet the needs of employers and adult and youth customers.
- b) Modify the waiver allowing the set aside of up to 10% of local formula allocated funding for statewide activities. The proposed change would increase the set aside limit to 50% of each WIA funding stream and promote additional flexibility and creativity in designing programs to meet targeted employer and clients groups.
- c) Request a waiver of the prohibition on use of WIA funds for economic development activities not directly related to training. The proposed waiver would include human capital solutions such as developing industry recognized competency models, but would **not** include the ability to use funds for infrastructure development or business financing.
- d) Request a waiver of the requirement to provide the ten WIA Youth program elements. These elements include tutoring, alternative secondary school services, summer employment opportunities, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skills training, leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, follow-up services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling. The intent is to increase flexibility in designing programs customized to the local labor market and targeted to the special needs of the hardest to serve youth.
- e) Modify the current waiver regarding the competitive selection requirements for providers of youth services. The intent is to expand the current waiver authority (which applies to supportive services, follow-up, and work experience) to include all ten youth program elements. The purpose is to encourage greater participation of small community and faith-based organizations in workforce partnerships, and increase customer choice.

Motion made to approve the proposed changes to the State Plan

(Joe)

Seconded (Mark)

Comments: The Plan Waivers follow what the State Workforce Board Chairs are supporting for more flexibility.

Motion Passed

III. Strategic Planning

Background

The State Plan was put together collaboratively by CDLE and the Office of Workforce Development (OWD). The Plan was submitted to the US Department of Labor and approved; it is now being used as a model by the Department of Labor for other states in creating their Plans.

The Skills Development and Partnership Committee (SDPC) held a Strategic Planning session last Spring to look at what the Council's focus should be for the future. There were many partners that were present and they spoke about their challenges and what assistance they need. The Executive Committee met over the summer to further discuss the direction of the Council and to talk about more specific tactics.

The Executive Committee wants the Council's focus to be on policies that build Economic Development and increase employer participation and awareness of the system. There should be an increase in the number and power of collaborations and partnerships. Currently, businesses don't lead the system they maintain the status quo. The intention of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is that businesses should be actively engaged, so the system needs to activate business participation. It has been agreed that sustainable initiatives should be rewarded; grants shouldn't be given out just because a region is looking for money.

Within the Council Mission and the Council Goals, there are three strategies that should be employed by each sub-committee:

- a) Align Employer-Driven Workforce Development with Economic Development
- b) Identify Career Development Pathways in Emerging Industries
- c) Invest in Locally and Regionally-Based Solutions to Meet Marketplace Needs

SWIS Committee Goals

Primary Goal: Support local Centers and operators in their efforts to strengthen regional economies through locally-driven strategically targeted workforce development activities.

Secondary Goals:

- a) Promote continuous improvement in the workforce system delivery of employment and training services.
- b) Create a system award event to award continuous improvement recognition to foster system development and improvement.

- c) Research, create and support best practice implementation across the system.
- d) Develop and encourage development of innovative employment and training projects to serve adults throughout the state.
- e) Support demonstration pilots of exceptional and innovative transformational workforce projects.

There have been many projects that support the goals of the SWIS Committee:

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| • Northern Healthcare Consortium – Adams, Boulder, & Larimer | • Coalition for the Homeless |
| • Community Reintegration Program for Ex-Offenders – Denver | • e-Colorado Portal |
| • Turning Point: Reentering the Workforce after Incarceration – Eastern | • Annual Report |
| • Workforce Development Liaison – Larimer | • State Plan |
| • Casino Management Certification – Tri-County | • Local Board Certification |
| • RAPT Workforce Pipeline – Tri-County | • State Policy |
| • WELLS Center | • WIA 10% Discretionary Fund Allocation |
| | • Approve Wagner-Peyser and WIA Allocations for the regions |
| | • CIMS |
| | • Job Vacancy Survey |
| | • Eligible Training Provider |
| | • Labor Market Information Plan Approval |
| | • Project TRAIN, DPN Initiative |

Most state agencies are participating on the WELLS Center. Currently, the planning group is working on getting a governing board in place. The purpose of the Center is to reduce the cost of getting new nurses in the field and reduce the time period in getting new nurses up to speed on the job. The Center is geared toward recent graduates of nursing school. The curriculum is still being developed. Elise Lowe-Vaughn or Sue Carparelli can provide information on visiting the temporary facility.

Open Discussion

Strategies need to be developed to take the Council's three areas of concentration and apply them; giving direction to the OWD staff.

Should the Council contract with Mark Warne to expand the work (training workforce center staff on how to work with ex-offenders) that he is doing in a couple of regions to the rest of the state? Should the Council take the Larimer County Workforce Development Liaison model and expand that to all of the regions, spreading the Economic Development concept? Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) has been hired to help with exactly these issues; they will also be working with the local regions on collaboration.

There needs to be a clear message. What are the hottest areas to concentrate on and the ones that can translate across Colorado? Energy is a hot topic and an area of focus that the SWIS Committee should look at. The regions should be given the information, and then allowed to create their own projects around that. Then, the SWIS Committee will decide what projects to fund.

Technical Assistance should be provided, but not forced on the regions. Offer as much information to the State as a whole and its up to each local region to accept it. (Peggy)

The Council should have someone come in from the Colorado system to present at an industry-specific meeting. Forums should be held within each region to discuss needs and talk about the workforce system. A specific topic should be discussed each time. Whatever region has the industry that becomes the SWIS Committee's focus should partner with other regions to share ideas.

Regions need Best Practices to demonstrate to the State what works.

The thrust of today's discussion has been Technical Assistance around re-entry of ex-offenders and Economic Development. If a focus is selected today, it doesn't mean that there can't be changes made. There is a proposal to do an assessment in the Rural regions surrounding Economic Development and how successful that partnership is. (Booker)

Renewable Energy is another area that should be a focus of this Committee. (Joe)

Council Strategies

Align Employer-Driven Workforce Development with Economic Development

Regions need to be actively engaged. OWD would be the catalyst for collaboration.

Workforce Center staff certification.

Identify Career Development Pathways in Emerging Industries

The SWIS Committee should become a clearinghouse for information, e.g. soft skills assessment and follow-up. Money should be spent on defeating the current gaps.

Job skills training is missing in re-entry efforts, assisting the homeless, etc. Clients have to be taught how to get work, keep work, and progress up the career ladder. Without that you're only treating a temporary problem. A statewide project should be looked into that examines soft skills deficiencies. Should mini-workshops on soft skills be conducted? More and more employers will be asking for the soft skills.

WorkNet Solutions conducts workshops on working with hard-to-place clients and improving soft skills. This training occurs in all of the regions. The curriculum can be purchased once the training is completed.

(Andrea)

A community development model should be used for Technical Assistance. All of the agencies in an area should collaborate. There should be clear communication between the agencies. The regions have to be made to understand what can be accomplished by working together. OWD has liaisons on each Workforce Investment Board (WIB) that can take a convener role to facilitate this discussion.

Invest in Locally and Regionally-Based Solutions to Meet Marketplace Needs

Technical Assistance is a goal of this strategy.

Focus on funding availability for reentry projects and a process to access them.

Assist local communities in responding to homeless issues in their communities. The Coalition for the Homeless is a hot button issue. There is currently a ten-year plan to eliminate homelessness in Colorado. One of the top issues is housing, which is a top priority in sustaining employment. The focus has expanded to include employment and training. There is a model in Arizona that puts a workforce center in a homeless shelter, which marries social services and workforce development. Mesa County has also established a satellite workforce center in a homeless shelter. Training the homeless population can be very challenging based on several factors, e.g. time constraints, drug/alcohol assistance, education, etc. The SWIS Committee should continue to look into this issue. Warren Village may also be a good model in Denver. Booker will look into what they do; Samantha will provide their contact information.

There should be some look taken at successful projects outside of Colorado. We don't want to reinvent the wheel.

Should we invest in special projects or maintain current business levels (due to budget reductions)? (Tom)

Who makes the determination on what funds state agencies receive? When is the decision made on how much and who gets it? (Mark)

Where is NAWB going to focus their funds (last year was Youth) this year? (Doug)

Booker will review what's been discussed, put a matrix together, and report back on the areas that the group has given OWD to look into.

IV. Work Readiness Certification

Certification of workforce center staff is something that the SWIS Committee should work on. The staff needs to be responsive to issues and follow-up in the right way. They also have to be capable of performing the duties of the workforce center. OWD should look into the feasibility of workforce staff certification. It will take time, but could be beneficial. Would the SWIS Committee set policy or seek out a working methodology? Investigate and find something that most on the Committee can agree on, then present it to the Directors. If there can be a way to get into the General Fund, that gives the Council/SWIS Committee the power to push this initiative forward. Booker will come back to the Committee with recommendations to provide Elise with resources as she is already working on this issue and wants it to be a national conversation.

Motion made for Booker to proceed to implement the Council's three strategies through the goals and missions that have been discussed. (Mark)

Booker will provide a summarized report and measured tactics.

Seconded (Tom)

Motion Passed

V. Miscellaneous

The US Department of Labor is coming in April and doing a two-week review. The first week will be CDLE and OWD and the second week will look at activities on a local level.

Adjourned at 3:00pm